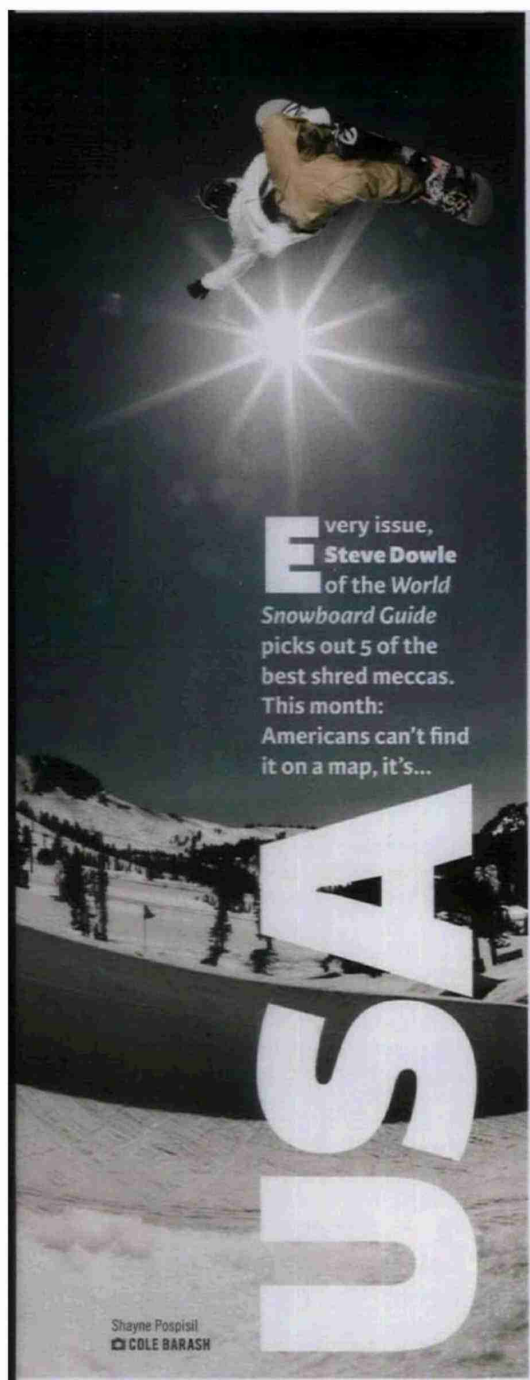


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UTAH
LIFE ELEVATED



Every issue, **Steve Dowle** of the World Snowboard Guide picks out 5 of the best shred meccas. This month: Americans can't find it on a map, it's...

Shayne Pospisil
COLE BARASH



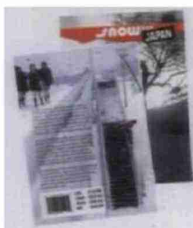
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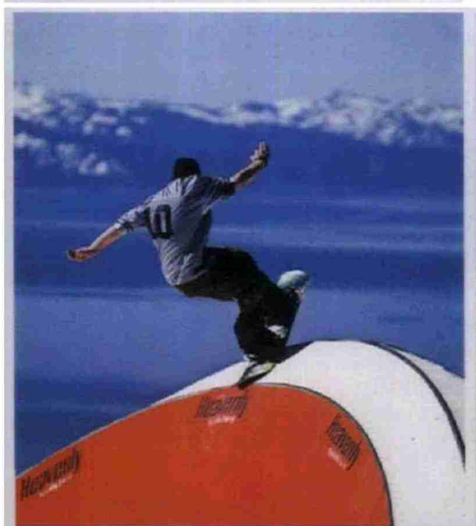
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Steve Dowle is the editor of the *World Snowboard Guide*, which has been reviewing resorts for fellow riders since 1996. Their latest in depth book, *Snowsearch Japan*, is out now.
worldsnowboardguide.com



HEAVENLY

Tahoe's lakeside legend

5

THE PARK ★★★★★

Heavenly boasts four terrain parks: the Players Park, High Roller, Ante Up and – for beginners – the Groove Park. The full time crew keep things ticking over quite nicely and there's usually a nice flow to the parks.

THE PISTES ★★★★★

Over 4000 acres makes this one of the biggest resorts in North America. There are plenty of great pistes, although total beginners are not as well catered for as everyone else. Runs such as Liz's and Big Dipper are always good fun, and the piste down to Stagecoach lodge on the Nevada side of the state border are great carving motorways.

THE POW ★★★★★

Heavenly really comes into its own after snowfall, with some of the best terrain being on the Nevada

side. Most of the resort is gladed trees, but get yourself over to the Milky Way bowl after a fresh dump for some more open terrain. Advanced riders who like their slopes steep and covered with trees should check out the North Bowl, while those who really know their stuff must check out the Mott & Killebrew Canyon areas.

THE PARTIES ★★★★★

Stay down in South Lake Tahoe and you'll find all the bars and debauchery you will ever need. You can't go wrong heading to Whiskey Dicks or McP's, which hosts live music every night, but take a wander past the California state line into Nevada for casinos and nightclubs such as Vex's – located in Harrahs.

GOOD FOR...

Losing yourself in the trees.

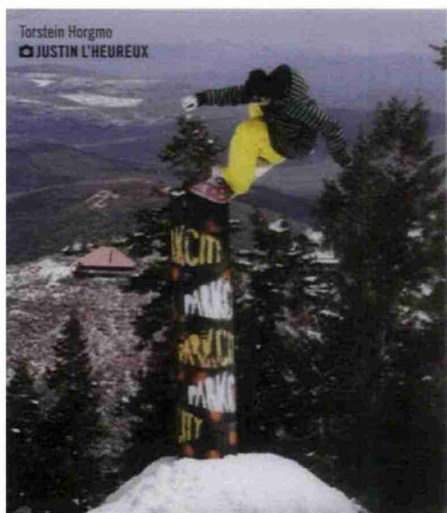
NOT SO GOOD FOR...

Losing your money in the casinos.



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PARK CITY

Park and Party in Utah

4

THE PARK ★★★★★

Almost every shred movie features at least a couple of hits from Park City - the place has three parks and a superpipe that hosted the 2002 Olympics. The Ridge kicks things off for the beginner and intermediate rider, progressing onto the Three Kings (which is open every night) and then onto the King's Crown, which is strictly for those who know what they're doing.

THE PISTES ★★★★★☆

It's not the steepest of resorts, but 114 pistes spread over 3300 acres will give those wanting to stay on the groomers plenty to do. There is a fine choice of good cruising trails, such as the runs off the King Con chair lift, and beginners will find few better places to learn to snowboard.

THE POW ★★★★★☆

Utah is known for its light, fluffy pow and Park City gets 9m of it every season. Check-out McConkey's Bowl where there are some great double diamond runs that weave through the trees. A little hiking from the Jupiter lift accesses more deep powder bowls, but make sure you know what you're doing.

THE PARTIES ★★★★★☆

The preconception of Utah's drinking laws (having to join special members clubs or learn a

masonic handshake) don't apply here, and there are a surprising number of regular bars. Pubs like No Name Saloon, O'Shuck's, and Lindzee O' Michaels are popular, while nightclub Cisero's is open until the early hours.

GOOD FOR...

Long freestyle runs.

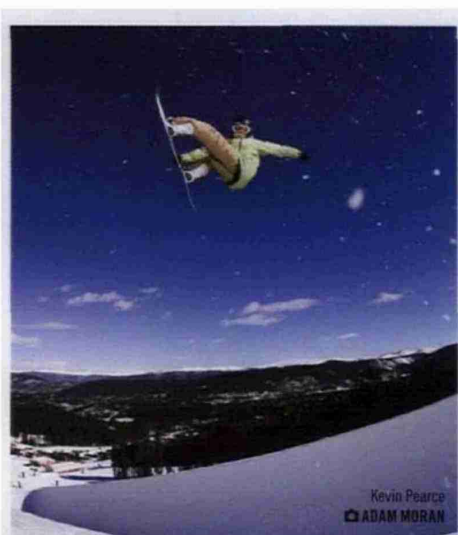
NOT SO GOOD FOR...

Having the place to yourself - especially at weekends.



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BRECKENRIDGE

Worth breaking the budget for

3

THE PARK ★★★★★

Colorado does parks very well, but Breckenridge still manages to keep its head above the competition. With five parks and two halfpipes – including a new Olympic pipe for this season – freestylers are well looked after. Maintenance of the parks is pretty spectacular, and careful thought has gone into making sure every rider is catered for. There's some good natural freestyle terrain as well – Lehman trail is worth checking out.

THE PISTES ★★★★★

There's something for everyone here, with the majority cut through the trees and lots of short, steep runs. Speed-freaks should try out the Centennial trail, which is a long flat and perfect for cranking out some big turns. Intermediates will find the runs off Peak 10 the place to be, in particular Crystal.

THE POW ★★★★★

After a fresh dump head to the back bowls off Peak 8 and Peak 9's North Face. Here you'll find plenty of terrain for riders who know how to snowboard. At the top of Chair 6 there are loads of good hits and drop offs, while lower down there are some wicked tree runs.

THE PARTIES ★★☆☆☆

There are a good number of bars and a few nightclubs like Cecilia's, but you wouldn't call it crazy. Stoners take note – they decriminalised weed here last year, but it's no Amsterdam.

GOOD FOR...

Park riding and checking out the other nearby resorts.

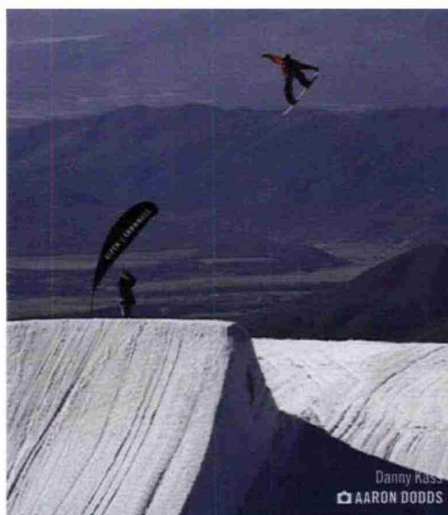
NOT SO GOOD FOR...

Riders on a budget.



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Snowmass and Highlands have their own modern, purpose built village, but old Aspen town is still the best place to head for. Very expensive and very posy it is, but there are a good number of bars – and at least during the early evening there are a few places which do pitcher specials.

GOOD FOR...

Epic tree riding at Snowmass.

NOT SO GOOD FOR...

Looking superfly in that TK Maxx snowboard jacket.

ASPEN

Film star resort, blockbuster mountains

2

THE PARK ★★★★★☆

As well as and hosting the X Games halfpipe and slopestyle competitions, Buttermilk has won *Transworld's* Best Park award for the last three years, so it has a lot going for it (unlike the rest of Buttermilk). Over 100 features are spread over the two mile long park. Over in Snowmass there are another three terrain parks, including 90 more features and two more halfpipes.

THE PISTES ★★★★★☆

Aspen Mountain springs up from the town and has both really mellow and surprisingly steep runs, though it is the only area to still have a little bit of anti snowboard snobbery about it. Aspen Highlands is pretty bland on the piste, and you can forget about Buttermilk. Snowmass is a different story: spread over a much larger area, it has some fine easy and long gladed groomers.

THE POW ★★★★★☆

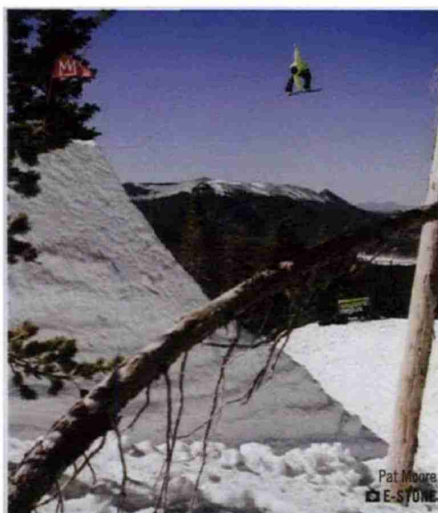
Snowmass again comes up trumps on the freeriding front; after one of its regular dumps the tree riding is truly fantastic. Head to Hanging Valley and Cirque for some double black steepes and powder bowls, while the run known as Baby Ruth will give advanced riders a real buzz.

THE PARTIES ★★★★★☆



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MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

Lives up to its name

1

THE PARK ★★★★★

With seven terrain parks and three halfpipes covering 90 acres, the stats sound impressive – and the reality is just as good. The main unbound park gets all the headlines, but it is the care they take trying to progress your skills by building a park for every ability that really benefits the average rider. It's the same story with the halfpipe; start off in the mini-pipe with its 10ft walls and hopefully one day you'll progress to the 22ft Olympic sized monster.

THE PISTES ★★★★★

The vast majority of the pistes are cut through the trees, but the whole mountain is very open with lots of wide, very well maintained runs with few flat spots to worry about. There are pistes these days running back to all the main bases, so there's no longer any need to take lifts to get back into the town. The Sesame Street area (yes, Sesame Street!) is an excellent place for beginners to start and is separated from the other runs.

THE POW ★★★★★

With trees, big bowls and loads of natural hits to catch air – especially in areas such as Huevos Grande and Hangman's Hollow – there's a lot to keep the powder loving freerider busy. You do get some 'Sierra cement' days where yesterday's

pow has set solid, but it snows so often that it's not a big deal.

THE PARTIES ★★★★★

Nightlife is good without being crazy. Most of the action is located in the Village, but do venture beyond the modern into Mammoth Lakes.

GOOD FOR...

Safely pushing your freestyle.

NOT SO GOOD FOR...

At £60 for a day pass you'll need a Mammoth wallet.